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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: April 23, 1952

SUBJECT: Belgian reply to Secretary's message on EDC timetable.

PARTICIPANTS: Baron SILVERCRUYS, Belgian Ambassador
Mr. Bruce, Under Secretary
Mr. McClelland - WE

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Ambassador Silvercruys said that he had just received an urgent communication from his Foreign Minister in reply to the Secretary's personal message of April 11 concerning the exigencies of the timetable for signing the EDC treaty.

The Ambassador stated that the Belgian Government believed that May 9th was really too early and would be inclined to regard May 20th, or thereabouts, as a more likely date. As to the place, the Belgian Government favored Paris for signing the EDC, all the work on that treaty having been done there from the beginning, and Bonn for the German Contractuals.

I told the Ambassador that we had originally proposed The Hague as the locale for signature of both instruments, believing that it would be impractical to have signing ceremonies in two separate places. We had, however, abandoned this idea, and now favor Paris and Bonn. I added that the Ambassador should consider this a personal statement since we believed that it was not up to the United States to express a public

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preference in this matter, our official position being that anything the Europeans decided on was agreeable to us.

Recapitulating our position, Ambassador Silvercruys said that, as he now understood it, we are agreed on the locale for the EDC signature and would be willing to accept May 20th if the signing cannot take place earlier.

I corrected the Ambassador, stating that May 20th was not actually acceptable to us since we still very much hoped the EDC could be signed before that date because of the Congressional situation here.

The Ambassador said that personally he was fully familiar with this situation and in sympathy with us.

Just before leaving, Ambassador Silvercruys told me that he had talked by telephone to Mr. Spaak at Haverford this morning and had prevailed upon him not to return to Belgium for the traditional First of May, as he had originally intended, but to come to Washington on April 30 and stay a day or so. He said that he was planning to have a small men's dinner for Spaak and hoped that I would be able to come. I said I should be very happy to do so. The Ambassador added that he hoped Jean Monnet would also still be in town and could come.

HDB

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Enclosures:

Original of Belgian message.
Informal translation

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